

MARY ELIZABETH HIESKELL.

MAY 16, 1898.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

Mr. BOTKIN, from the Committee on Invalid Pensions, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 2545.]

The Committee on Invalid Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 2545) granting an increase of pension to Mary Elizabeth Hieskell, have examined the same and the evidence relating thereto and respectfully report:

This bill as amended proposes to increase from \$8 to \$20 per month the pension of Mary Elizabeth Hieskell, of Philadelphia, Pa., widow of Horace M. Hieskell, late pay director, United States Navy, who was commissioned a purser in the Navy, title changed to paymaster, July 22, 1860. Appointed fleet paymaster May 8, 1864. Commissioned a pay director March 3, 1871. Placed on the retired list September 24, 1875. He died at Philadelphia, Pa., December 26, 1891. A transcript from the records of the city of Philadelphia shows that he died December 26, 1891, of general paresis, aged 74.

The widow, this claimant, filed a claim February 24, 1892, under the general law, which was rejected December 10, 1895, on the ground that death resulted from general paresis not due to any disability in service which has been legally accepted.

Soldier is shown by the records to have been treated in service in 1845 for fever, purging, and pain in the bowels. In 1856 for colic; in 1858 for fever following chill; in 1873 for conjunctivitis, and in 1874 for intermittent fever and subluxatio; in 1875 for acute tonsillitis, chronic rheumatism, and rheumatic gout.

Wm. R. Dunton, M. D., testifies that Horace M. Hieskell was under his professional care from 1868 to the time of his death. That while on duty in China he contracted dysentery, from which he never entirely recovered, being always afterwards subject to relapses. He also, while on duty, contracted rheumatism, to severe attacks of which he was subsequently subject. In consequence of these infirmities he became prematurely old and feeble. He was attacked with hemiplegia in 1886 and gradually the paralysis became general. His death, which was

hastened by the prevailing epidemic of influenza, occurred December 26, 1891, at the age of 74 years.

The same physician, in an affidavit executed March 22, 1894, says:

After exposure on a passage to Washington in charge of Government money, Pay Director Hieskell had a very severe attack of rheumatism—his first—from which he never fully recovered, and afterwards he was also liable to acute attacks. His heart was feeble, but I do not remember any valvular disease. In 1887, after a chill, he had a very severe attack of hemiplegia of the entire right side, with aphasia, from which he only partially recovered. He had a very slight attack previously, and two afterwards. About two years subsequently to his severe attack signs of general paresis appeared. On the west coast of Africa he contracted the fever. In the China seas he suffered with dysentery and diarrhea and always afterwards from sequelæ of these diseases. Consequently his health was poor and his senile condition premature, which probably caused his paresis.

This claimant was married to Pay Director Hieskell February 16, 1881, his former wife having died in 1875, and is 44 years of age. She is pensioned at \$8 per month as a Mexican war widow, on account of the services of her husband in the Mexican war. It is alleged by the claimant that unless she secures a further pension from the Government she will be compelled to seek shelter in some charitable institution or be dependent upon the bounty of friends. A similar bill was favorably reported from this committee in the Fifty-fourth Congress at \$30 per month.

The following is a copy of a letter from Thomas H. Looker, former Paymaster-General of the Navy:

THE COMMITTEE ON INVALID PENSIONS.

GENTLEMEN: As former Paymaster-General of the Navy (now retired) and as an old friend of the same rank (relative rank of commodore) of Pay Director H. M. Hieskell, U. S. N., his widow, Mary Elizabeth Hieskell, appeals to me to aid in her application for a pension of \$30 per-month.

Pay Director Hieskell was one of the best and most meritorious officers of the Navy, serving many years. He once saved one of our vessels of war to the Government and the lives of officers and men from a planned mutiny which he discovered and reported (the brig *Somers*), and again in Norfolk, in 1861, he, at the risk of his life, patriotically saved moneys and valuable papers from capture by the enemy.

These were great and signal and meritorious services to his country. His widow and daughter are in great need. I earnestly trust that the pension may be granted.

Respectfully,

THOS. H. LOOKER,
United States Navy.

The bill is therefore reported back with the recommendation that it pass when amended as follows:

In line 4, after the word "roll," insert "subject to the provisions and limitations of the pension laws."

In line 6, after the word "Navy," insert "and pay her a pension."

In line 6 strike out the word "thirty" and insert in lieu thereof the word "twenty."

Strike out all after the word "month" in line 7 and insert in lieu thereof the following: "in lieu of the pension she is now receiving."

Amend the title so as to read: "A bill granting an increase of pension to Mary Elizabeth Hieskell."